

*TOWARDS  
A WORLD OF PLENTY*

FAO

The Story of the  
Food and Agriculture  
Organisation of the  
United Nations

HX  
632  
A1  
W9  
No. 1211

MAIN

*Published for the*  
UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION ORGANISATION  
38 RUSSELL SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.1  
*in co-operation with the*  
UNITED NATIONS INTERIM COMMISSION  
ON FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
*by* HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE  
LONDON, 1945

# **Towards a World of Plenty**

**The Story of the Food and Agriculture  
Organisation of the United Nations**

---

## **I. THE UNITED NATIONS IN WAR AND IN PEACE**

The world is still poor, its peoples malnourished. This is easily forgotten by those who live in the wealthiest countries, where the scientific discoveries of the last three hundred years have brought immense increases in production and well-being. Even in these countries, one-third of the people were badly fed before the war, while in the poorer countries nearly everyone lacked a proper diet.

Agriculture, although by far the most important of human industries, remains in most countries primitive or under-equipped, while the farming community, even in the wealthier countries, lacks the social services and other opportunities enjoyed by those who dwell in cities.

The United Nations therefore put first things first when at Hot Springs, Virginia, in May 1943, they decided to attack the problems of food and agriculture.

This first conference of the United Nations should be an assurance that the bitter experience of the between-war period will not be repeated, that the co-operation learnt in the hard ways of war will be carried on into the peace.

The United Nations have agreed to work together not only to prevent war but also to achieve the positive goal of an expanding economy based on rising standards of living with high and stable levels of employment, or in other words that their peoples shall have fuller, healthier and therefore happier lives.

The Atlantic Charter pledges

“securing for all, improved labour standards, economic advancement, and social security” ; and  
“assurance that all men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want” ;

Mutual Aid Agreements bind the signatories to undertake

“agreed action . . . directed to the expansion, by appropriate international and domestic measures, of production, employment, and the exchange and consumption of goods, which are the material foundations of the liberty and welfare of all peoples” ;

The Final Act of the Hot Springs Conference on Food and Agriculture recommended that the governments recognise

“the obligation to their respective peoples and to one another, henceforth to collaborate in raising levels of nutrition and standards of living of their peoples, and to report to one another on the progress achieved.”

### **Will These Pledges be Redeemed ?**

These are no light pledges. How are they to be redeemed ? It is easy for the leaders of the United Nations to use “comfortable” words and for conferences to adopt resolutions. It is much more difficult to carry such intentions into effective action.

The pledges will remain words on paper in the absence of both national and international action. National action will, in many instances, be the more important but it will only be fully effective if it is backed up by international co-operation. The sequence of events in the 1930's has proved that full

employment cannot be achieved in one country if other important countries have serious unemployment ; one country cannot be prosperous when the rest of the world is in a state of serious economic dislocation. The ills from which whole nations suffer are contagious and no one nation can secure for itself alone peace and prosperity.

Mindful of this, the United Nations are taking steps to set up a number of organisations to build a secure future. At the United Nations conferences at Hot Springs, Atlantic City, Bretton Woods, Montreal, and Chicago, at the discussions between the Great Powers at Dumbarton Oaks, and at the United Nations Conference on International Organisation at San Francisco, specific plans have been agreed for the relief of war-stricken countries, for world food and agriculture, for monetary stability and international investment, for civil aviation policies, and for security and economic co-operation.

It is essential that these plans be acted on and, that the permanent international organisations should be set up as soon as possible.

Total war shatters the forms and customs of economic and social life. For some time to come conditions will be fluid, and there will be a period, probably short, in which new ideas, new methods of co-operation between nations can be brought into effect without any long struggle with old-established interests. If this time is to be used to advantage it must be used now.

## **II. FAO—THE FIRST PERMANENT UNITED NATIONS ORGANISATION**

First to be proposed among the new international organisations was the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO). The President of the United States, in February 1943, invited the forty-four United and Associated Nations to participate in a conference on food and agriculture. Meeting in May at Hot Springs, Virginia, the Conference recognised that freedom from want requires as its foundation

a secure, an adequate, and a suitable supply of food for every man, woman and child. The delegates agreed that through scientific advances it is now possible to attain this, though in many countries it will first be necessary to win freedom from acute hunger before broadening the goal to freedom from want. Primary responsibility for seeing that its people have the food needed for life and health lies with the individual nation, but each nation can fully achieve its goal only in concert with others.

Clearly, the first cause of hunger and malnutrition is poverty. It is useless to produce more food unless men can buy it. For all people to be adequately fed, there must be an expansion of the world economy. This means increased employment, increased agricultural and industrial production and flow of trade. It also requires stable currencies, sound investments, the absence of exploitation, and economic equilibrium.

This expansion is the responsibility of all the nations ; it cannot be produced either by any one country or through any one international organisation. The various economic and social agencies will have to be concerned with various aspects of the expanding world economy. But this does not mean that the FAO can do nothing until the other organisations are established. The Declaration of Hot Springs ends with the words :

“ The first steps towards freedom from want of food must not await the final solution of all other problems. Each advance made in one field will strengthen and quicken advances in all others. Work already begun must be continued. Once the war has been won decisive steps can be taken. We must make ready now.”

### **Historical Background**

The international approach to food and agriculture has a considerable history. In the first years of this century, on the initiative of David Lubin from California, an International Institute of Agriculture was set up, a body that did useful work in a field, limited by the terms of its constitution.

In the late 1920's agriculture was depressed while industry was still booming ; in the 1930's, after the factory wheels stopped turning, large unsaleable surpluses of many foods drew public attention to the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty.

Simultaneously the scientists were demonstrating through the newer knowledge of nutrition the profound effects of suitable foods on health and in the prevention and elimination of many specific diseases.

In 1935 the League of Nations, the International Institute of Agriculture, and the International Labour Organisation determined to undertake work on the subject of nutrition in relation to social, agricultural and economic problems. In making this approach to the League Assembly, Mr. S. M. Bruce, the leader of the Australian Delegation, asked :

“ Is it not possible to marry health and agriculture and, by so doing, make a great step in the improvement of national health and, at the same time, an appreciable contribution to the solution of the agricultural problem ? ”

The League, through its Health Organisation, set up a Technical Commission, consisting of world famous medical scientists, physiologists and biochemists to assess human requirements for food. This Commission decided that in view of the apparent agricultural over-production there was no justification for thinking of food in *minimum* terms, but that it should rather consider and report on *optimum* food requirements—in other words, the quantities and qualities of food, expressed in terms of nutrients, needed in order to maintain perfect health.

The report of this Commission was the first international assessment of food requirements and the first to express these on an optimum basis.

The League, through its Economic Organisation, set up another Committee of experts—the Mixed Committee, consisting of scientists, economists, agriculturalists, and public officials. This group was asked to report on the relation of



nutrition to health, agriculture and economic problems. The final report to the 1937 Assembly of the League presented evidence of the extent of malnutrition in the world, called attention to its relation to poverty and ignorance, and to the effect of improvements in nutrition on health and on agriculture. The Committee stated :

“ The malnutrition which exists in all countries is at once a challenge and an opportunity : a challenge to men’s consciences and an opportunity to eradicate a social evil by methods which will increase economic prosperity.”

The Committee recommended that governments should establish national nutrition committees consisting of persons concerned with health, agriculture, trade and economic questions. Thus there would be in each country a body responsible to governments for proposing the means of putting into operation the recommended “ integrated approach ” to the problems of food and agriculture.

During 1937 and 1938 some 25 governments established such national nutrition committees, and meetings between representatives of these countries were organised by the League in 1938 and 1939. But the initiative came too late. The challenge of fascism prevented an integrated approach to human welfare.

## War Food Policies

Yet the research of the between-war years has by no means lain unused since 1939. Several countries, at the outbreak of war, faced the danger of starvation, with normal food supplies cut off either by blockade or shipping shortages. This necessitated drastic action on the part of their governments. In both the Allied and Axis countries the tragic effects of food shortages in the First World War were remembered.

Vigorous action was taken to prevent the past repeating itself after 1940, action which was exactly what the Mixed Committee of the League had recommended but which had



been regarded by many governments in the late 1930's as an impractical dream. For the first time, in a whole series of countries, the production and consumption of national food supplies were planned in terms of human needs. The nutritional requirements of the people were estimated in terms of calories, proteins, carbohydrates and the other nutrients essential to health. Special allowances were made for heavy workers, for children, and for nursing mothers. These requirements were converted into terms of actual foodstuffs, and the problem of how to provide them was faced.

The food available within the country was rationed to the consumers by the Governments in accordance with their health needs. Particular care was used in rationing the protective foods such as milk, eggs, meat, cheese, etc. Where national food supplies were found to be insufficient, an effort was made to right the balance either from imports, or by stimulating farmers to increase their yields or shift their production to different types of foodstuffs. The remarkable result has been achieved that in some countries the general level of the health of the people has actually improved under war conditions. In others, a limit has been put to the widespread starvation which would have been inevitable without careful planning.

Many of the lessons which have been learned from the management of food under conditions of wartime shortages can be applied in peacetime when total supplies will be larger. War, as a distinguished French scientist has said, is a great obstetrician ; new ideas and new trends are brought forth. The problem is to see that the socially desirable ideas and trends are allowed to grow and develop in times of peace.

The integration of nutritional policy and agricultural policy recommended by the League's Mixed Committee and achieved by certain countries during the war is the basis of the post-war approach. This means that if production and consumption are to be matched more successfully than in the past, both at the national and international level, physical resources and physical needs must be studied directly and together, with

a view to overcoming the barriers which impede the flow from producer to consumer.

Joint consideration of nutrition and agriculture implies emphasis on the interests of both farmers and consumers, the integration of the people's food needs with agriculture's farming needs. It would repudiate cheap food obtained through unwise exploitation of the soil. It would conserve and improve the productivity of the land and assure better living standards to farm communities at the same time as improving human diets.

All men on earth are consumers of food and more than two-thirds of them are producers of food. Men cannot eat more food and more healthful foods unless there is a sufficient supply. If more and better food is to be available for all people, producers must know what they are called upon to do. And they must be assured that their labour will earn them an adequate livelihood.

The work of the Hot Springs Conference emphasised the fundamental interdependence of the consumers and producers. The discussions showed that the types of food most generally required to improve people's diets and health are in many cases those which maintain the productivity of the soil and mean greater economic security for the producers.

In the discussions, representatives of some of the nations drew attention to the state of health in their respective countries. It was made clear that a state of malnutrition exists in every country among some sections of the population and that in many countries the majority of the people are grossly ill-nourished. The close relation between disease, length of life, infant mortality, malnutrition, and poverty was also apparent.

Recognising the obligation of nations to raise the levels of nutrition and the standard of living of the peoples under their jurisdiction and to improve the efficiency of agricultural production and distribution, the Conference proceeded to consider means for fulfilling it. To assist governments in their attempts to improve standards in their own countries and to

co-ordinate their efforts, one with another, it was proposed that an international organisation, to be known as the FAO, should be set up to deal with all the problems of food and agriculture.

The international technique proposed and adopted was entirely new. The Conference recommended that governments should report both to their own peoples and also to other nations through the FAO about the state of nutrition and the progress of agriculture in their own countries. These reports will indicate the progress which has been made in raising national levels, and will thus bring the record of every reporting country before the bar of world opinion.

The Conference recognised that achievement of freedom from want will not be an easy or a quick task. A very greatly increased agricultural production will be needed ; all available scientific knowledge must be applied to agriculture. There must also be a considerable expenditure on capital equipment, for which credit will have to be available. A general expansion of national and international trade will also be necessary. Such a state of general prosperity can only be achieved if international co-operation is continued ; a first essential is to have peace and a sense of international political and economic security.

### **The Interim Commission on Food and Agriculture**

Determining that its work should not end with its own adjournment, the Conference recommended that an Interim Commission of the United Nations should (1) formulate and recommend for consideration by the member governments a specific plan for the permanent organisation, (2) draft a formal declaration of national obligations in respect to food and agriculture, and (3) make such proposals or reports as were necessary to give effect to the recommendations of the Conference.

This Commission was working in the United States in Washington, D.C., six weeks after the Conference closed. It is composed of representatives of the forty-four United and Associated Nations. Mr. L. B. Pearson, now Canadian

Ambassador to the United States, was appointed Chairman of the Commission, and Mr. P. W. Tsou, delegate of China, and Mr. P. I. Tchegoula, delegate of U.S.S.R., as Vice-chairmen. It has recruited a small international secretariat, and outstanding technical experts from many countries have been called in to give the Commission the benefit of their expert opinion. These scientists and economists, because of their interest in the FAO and their belief in the need for it, have given freely of their time to the planning of the organisation and of the early work of FAO.

During the first few months the Commission concentrated on drawing up a Constitution for the FAO and preparing the First Report to Governments on the scope and functions of the Organisation, aided by two panels of experts—one on the scientific aspects of food and agriculture and the other on the economic. When agreement was reached in committee, the Report and the Constitution were presented to the full Commission for consideration. The Constitution and Report as accepted by the delegates on an informal and personal basis were then sent informally to their home governments for their opinions. When replies came back, the Commission again went into session and agreed upon certain minor modifications and revisions. In the summer of 1944 the Constitution and Report were approved unanimously by the delegates and then sent formally to the governments for their acceptance. By August 22, 1945, twenty-four governments had sent formal notice of their intention to adhere to the Constitution.

The contribution of the experts to the work of the Interim Commission had been found so valuable in working out the plan of the FAO, that the Commission again called in a number of scientists, economists, statisticians, and other technicians when continuing its work of preparing for the establishment of the permanent organisation.

A Committee on Agricultural Production, first under the chairmanship of Prof. Scott Watson of the United Kingdom and later of Mr. Peters of the Netherlands, has prepared a report on the major problems facing the farmers of the world

and has made recommendations for concrete programmes of work to be undertaken by FAO.

A Committee on Nutrition and Food Management, under Dr. F. Boudreau, the Chairman of the U.S. Food and Nutrition Board, is reporting on the way experience gained in war can be utilised for purposes of peace.

A Committee on Forestry, under Dr. Graves, one of the most distinguished of American forestry experts, has presented a report on World Forestry and Primary Forest Products, and is also engaged on a second report on the more immediate world problems.

A Committee on Fisheries, with Dr. Finn, the Canadian Deputy-Minister of Fisheries, as Chairman, is reporting on the fisheries of the world.

A fifth technical Committee on Statistics, under Dr. Becker of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has under consideration the ways in which statistical information about food, agriculture, forestry and fisheries can be improved.

A Reviewing Panel is co-ordinating these reports, and is itself preparing a general report for the Conference, indicating the principal problems in FAO's various fields, and making recommendations as to what should be done by the FAO.

Another part of the preparation for the Conference, which will establish the FAO, is the organisational planning, which has been undertaken by a Committee of Commission members, members of the secretariat, and experts and representatives of other international organisations. This group has been working on the rules of procedure, on finance regulations, and on other matters connected with procedure which must be drafted before the Conference is held. In addition they are studying the problems of finance, personnel and administrative organisation, with a view to facilitating the work of the Director-General of the permanent organisation.

### **The Declaration**

As the Hot Springs Conference recommended, the Interim Commission has drafted a Declaration which will be signed by all the member Governments at the First Conference of the

FAO. The pledges which the Governments will make read as follows :

“ The said Governments and authorities solemnly pledge, to their own peoples and to one another, that they will work separately and together to the end that want and the fear of want shall be progressively abolished, and for this purpose will take all measures within their power :

“ To raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living of the peoples under their jurisdiction ;

“ To improve the efficiency of agricultural production and distribution.”

And they resolve :

“ To co-operate for the achievement of these ends and for this purpose to establish a permanent organisation for food and agriculture ;

“ To report to one another through this organisation on the measures taken and the progress achieved.”

## **The Constitution of the FAO**

The Constitution which the Interim Commission has drafted, and which has already been accepted by twenty-four nations, outlines the scope and functions of the FAO. The Organisation will be headed by a Conference composed of delegates of the member nations. The Conference will meet at least once each year and each member nation will have one vote. It will be the policy-making body and will supervise the activities and finances of the FAO. It will appoint an Executive Committee of from nine to fifteen members, who will be chosen for special qualifications and who will act for the Conference between sessions. The Executive Committee will carry out in more detail certain administrative functions for the Conference. Standing advisory committees of experts will be appointed to assist the Organisation in its technical work. These committees will include world authorities in agricultural production, nutrition, forestry, fisheries, marketing and statistics. They will enable the FAO to keep in close touch with current scientific and economic developments. The



members will be selected on the basis of their qualifications and not as representatives of governments.

The Director-General will be appointed by the Conference and will be responsible to it for the work of the FAO. He will select and organise its staff and will direct it in the carrying out of the functions of the Organisation and in the execution of the policies adopted by the Conference.

The staff will be selected from many countries and will be international civil servants. They will have an international, rather than a national viewpoint, and will receive their instructions exclusively from the FAO. The staff will, in the main, be technical experts—agricultural scientists and economists, forestry experts, nutrition experts, statisticians, fishery experts.

### **The Budget**

The Interim Commission has estimated that the average annual expenditure during the first five years will be about \$5,000,000 (£1,250,000). For the first year, however, a budget of \$2,500,000 is considered sufficient and it has been proposed that any unspent balance shall form the nucleus of a capital fund.

Proposal of a scale for the apportionment of expenses between the nations was found to be a difficult matter since many of the member countries were, or had been, occupied by the enemy or had suffered from major economic difficulties due to the war. A temporary allocation of expenses was, therefore, made for the first year; no attempt was made to relate the financial contribution to the national incomes of the member nations, nor to the relative importance of their trade in the products of agriculture, forestry and fisheries. The contributions of nations to the League of Nations was used as an initial guide, but this was scaled down in the case of the occupied countries. Provision was made that no one nation should contribute more than 25 per cent. of the total expenses. As a result, the United States will be asked for 25 per cent. of the budget; the United Kingdom for 15 per cent.; the U.S.S.R. for 8 per cent.; and China for 6.5 per cent.



## **The First FAO Conference**

It was decided that as soon as twenty countries had notified the Interim Commission of their decision to adhere to the Constitution, arrangements for the first Conference of the FAO could be made. Immediately before the Conference there will probably be a formal ceremony at which the heads of diplomatic missions will sign the Constitution and the Declaration on behalf of their Governments. This will dissolve the Interim Commission and will bring the permanent organisation into being.

The Conference will appoint the Director-General. It will decide what are to be the first tasks of the FAO in the fields of agricultural production and marketing, nutrition and food management, fisheries, forestry and primary forest products, and statistics. After the Conference has been held, the FAO will begin work immediately with a small nucleus staff.

The question as to where the headquarters of the Organisation shall be located is left to be determined by the Conference. Until a decision has been reached on the permanent headquarters, the temporary seat is to be in Washington.

## **III. WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF FAO ?**

### **Freedom from Want**

FAO aims at making a positive contribution towards freedom from want. Its objectives as set out in the Constitution are to further both separate and collective action on the part of the member nations in order that they may give effect to the Declaration which they will have made to their own peoples and to one another.

The Constitution further provides that the FAO shall be concerned with the betterment of the condition of rural populations.

FAO is concerned with all that man consumes in the way of foodstuffs. Besides food, FAO will include in its field of interest all other products which grow ; forestry and non-food agricultural products such as cotton, wool and silk. Fisheries will also come under its purview. In other words, FAO will

deal not only with consumers, but also with farmers, fishermen and foresters as producers, and all the sources of their income must be taken into consideration.

### **What Does Freedom from Want Mean ?**

The first requirement in achieving freedom from want is that there should be an adequate and suitable supply of food for the health and strength of all peoples. If this were achieved, deficiency diseases would be eliminated, resistance to such diseases as tuberculosis greatly increased and the average health of the people vastly improved. There would also be a further decrease in maternal and infant mortality in every country, and an almost universal increase in the expectation of life.

If comparison is made between the expectation of life and the amount of disease and ill-health suffered as between advanced and less-developed countries, or between well-to-do and poverty-stricken areas in the same countries, it becomes clear that those who are born and brought up in poverty have on the average a far shorter life and less prospect of that life being healthy than those who are born and brought up in conditions of prosperity.

To quote from the Hot Springs Report, "Malnutrition is found in all classes and countries, but more particularly it is the close and constant companion of poverty, both national and individual ; poverty almost invariably means a poor and insufficient diet, and the latter is the main cause of the disadvantages of the poor in respect of health, so clearly shown by statistics of disease and mortality." For instance, the average number of years which an inhabitant of India could expect to live in 1931 was 27, whereas in Holland or New Zealand it was about 66, more than twice as long. Statistics of infant mortality, which also bears a close relation to poverty and malnutrition, show that before the war in New Zealand only 32 out of every 1,000 infants died in the first year of their lives, whereas in Roumania the number was 189 and in Chile 225.

At this stage in the world's history, when science has made possible the production of all the food and clothing and shelter

needed for abundant health, such contrasts in the opportunity to live and be healthy ought not to be tolerated. It should be the aim of every country to build up the physique of its whole people so that the advantages of a long and healthy life may progressively be enjoyed by ever-larger proportions of the population.

It will be the aim of the FAO to assist the nations to attain this fundamental objective and in particular to help those nations whose lack of developed resources or of trained personnel increase their difficulties.

### **Increased Food Production**

Present world food supplies are inadequate to keep the peoples of the world healthy.

One of the major aims of FAO will be to try to increase food production to meet optimum consumption requirements.

One of the first problems will be to find out how much food is actually needed and how much is produced. In many parts of the world there are no accurate estimates of consumption needs, although certain general estimates have been attempted. For instance, in the United States it was calculated in 1939 that adequate nutrition for all the people would require about 40,000,000 more acres for raising food than were then in cultivation. There would have had to be an increase of about 25 per cent. in the production of vegetables and fruit, about 39 per cent. increase in milk products and about a 23 per cent. increase in eggs.

In some of the less developed countries the increase would have to be very much greater. For instance, in India food production would need to be increased by 50 per cent. to 300 per cent., varying for different types of foodstuffs. In the world as a whole, there will need to be a great expansion in agricultural production. If world production of cereals is raised by about 15 per cent. to 20 per cent. hunger might be satisfied ; people would have enough food in terms of calories. But production of such commodities as milk, meat, fruit and vegetables would have to be increased from 100 per cent. to 200 per cent. if the protective foods required for good health were to be sufficient.

Besides a general increase in output, the aim of post-war international food policy must be to prevent gluts in foodstuffs in certain parts of the world, and a resulting slump in agriculture such as that which followed the last war. Instead of restrictive agricultural policies, what is needed are definite policies to increase consumption and application of modern technical and scientific knowledge to agriculture in all parts of the world so that output per man hour can be increased and costs of production reduced, while at the same time the quality of the product is improved. There is scope for this particularly in the more primitive agricultural countries. But there will have to be education, technical aid, and the organisation of agricultural credit if this is to be made possible.

### **Industrial Production to Supply the Needs of Agriculture**

If agricultural production is to be increased, industrial production of agricultural implements and machinery will have to be increased also. Over the greater part of the world mechanisation of agriculture has not begun ; indeed, cultivators still rely on the crudest forms of ploughs and hand tools. This lack of equipment has been accentuated by the war. In many countries the production of agricultural machinery has had to give place to that of armaments in the last five or six years ; in others the war has caused actual destruction of existing equipment.

After the war farmers in the advanced countries will need new equipment, and there will also be great scope for the development of machines to reduce the hours of work needed to carry out the various farm operations.

In the less advanced countries, an enormous demand should develop for the simpler and smaller types of ploughs, cultivators, and seed drills, as well as hand tools.

Increased agricultural production also calls for a great improvement in road transport and this factor alone might have a profound effect upon increasing the economic activity of backward areas. New processing plants and storage facilities will be needed in many places. One of the tasks of FAO will be to study methods of improving processing and

of getting foodstuffs from the producer to the consumer with minimum loss of nutrient value.

The opening up of the forestry resources of South America or Central Africa will require machinery for road building, and mechanical transport. The fishing industry of the world needs general re-equipment with modern fishing craft, provided with efficient systems of refrigeration. After a time new industries in the under-developed countries may manufacture many of the simpler forms of agricultural equipment, but in the years directly following the replacement boom, which is expected to follow the end of war production, the equipment for world agriculture should prove of great importance to the employment of the industrial resources of the advanced countries.

International loans will be needed to make available capital equipment for new industries and to develop new markets. Ultimately this will increase the purchasing power of the people in these areas, and their demand for industrial and agricultural products.

### **Increased Domestic and International Trade**

It is useless to increase the amount of food, clothing or shelter produced in the world unless the people have access to it. To bring this about will necessitate a great increase in the movement of commodities both within and between nations. Improvements are needed in the distribution system which at present is often cumbersome, expensive and inefficient. The history of the last twenty years has shown that there may easily be food surpluses in one part of the world or even in one part of a country, and starvation in other parts. With increased production, therefore, there will have to be increased purchasing power and improved methods of distribution so that food supplies can pass freely from surplus to deficiency areas. Freedom from want requires the full employment of both human and natural resources and a balance between agriculture and industry. Agricultural development cannot come without an accompanying industrial development.

If the standard of living of agricultural producers is raised, and they have increased purchasing power, markets for industrial products will be increased. It will be an essential objective of FAO to encourage production of both agricultural and industrial goods where this can be done most economically. This will require a reduction of trade barriers, and a reversal of the policy of extreme protectionism and economic nationalism which prevailed just before the war. The final objective of all these measures is peace, economic security, full employment, and an economy of abundance. Only if national and international action is taken to raise the general level of employment in all countries will consumers be able to buy the increased food supplies and producers be assured of adequate returns.

FAO can only deal with certain parts of this problem—the scientific, technical and economic production and the consumption of foods and other agricultural products. It will, however, co-operate with other agencies which will be dealing with other parts—financial and industrial problems, for instance. Sir John Orr, the eminent Scottish authority on nutrition and agriculture, quotes a prominent American business man as saying :—

“ This new food policy will be a self-starter for a movement which will pull agriculture, industry, and trade out of the slough of post-war depression and set them on the road to an expanding world economy with resulting prosperity to everybody.”

#### IV. WHAT IS THE JOB OF FAO ?

The FAO will have functions related to the world as a whole, to the developed countries, and to those which are under-developed.

For all countries the FAO will be the international instrument for the achievement of the purposes set out in the Declaration and in the Preamble of the Constitution. Success in the progressive attainment of these purposes will mainly depend upon national action, but this must be supplemented by international



consultation, and co-operation, and in many cases by international advice and aid.

The first essential of life to every one of the 2,100 million people in the world is to be able to afford an adequate and healthful diet. This requires that there be enough money with which to buy the right food and that a sufficient supply of the right food be available. In addition everyone must have the knowledge of what are the right foods for keeping healthy.

It will be a long time before these three basic requirements are available to all people, but it must be the aim of FAO to assist the nations to bring this about.

There are two aspects to the problem of seeing that people are well fed, a short and a long-term approach. Certain immediate problems call for solution. Many groups in every country and in particular children have special food needs. The FAO will be concerned that special provision is made for these groups. In some of the Western countries this has already been done to a great extent by such means as the provision of free milk and low-cost school meals. Such issues are the responsibility of individual governments but the FAO can help with information and by advising member nations who will want to begin such measures.

While such forms of distribution of food are necessary, they are no cure. They only alleviate a basic illness. The cure calls for the long-term approach—an integrated advance on all fronts—a world-wide attack upon the problems of poverty. It means agricultural expansion, reorientation, improvements in agricultural producers' incomes, reduction of trade barriers, improved nutrition. In this approach, the FAO will be the international sponsor of the consumer, so far as food, clothing, and timber are concerned, and also for the farmer, peasant and small cultivator, the forester and the fisherman. It should act as the spokesman for these interests in all discussions between international organisations and before the General Assembly of the Nations. In the past these interests have hardly been heard when major economic policies have been under international discussion, yet they



are in point of numbers the most important interests in the world and in fact include all the people of the world.

Of equally general interest will be the functions of the FAO regarding the promotion of research, the dissemination of information, and its work as a centre of international information.

The FAO will not be an international scientific laboratory, it may indeed rarely undertake any strictly scientific research itself. It will, however, be in touch with all research institutions concerned with food, agriculture, forestry and fisheries and will stimulate and promote research. It will also facilitate exchange of scientific personnel between various countries.

The FAO, itself, will have to undertake much work as the centre of international information. It will collect world statistics on food and agriculture, will make special surveys on specific economic and social problems and publish the results. In these fields it will cover the whole of the ground previously covered by the I.I.A. (Rome), but will have much wider responsibilities.

The FAO will also be the world centre for information about agricultural credit, a subject of interest to all nations but perhaps especially to those whose resources are under-developed. In this field it will be prepared to assist governments with advice in the development of their national systems of agricultural credit. It has also been agreed that the FAO should act in consultative capacity to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development proposed at Bretton Woods on all matters concerning agriculture.

Certain of the more specific functions of the FAO although of world-wide application will especially concern the economically advanced countries with commercial agriculture. These include problems of international marketing, and in consultation with other international agencies, such questions as commodity arrangements, buffer stocks and other methods for preventing extreme fluctuations in the prices of agricultural products.

It will be the under-developed countries which will benefit most from the advisory functions of FAO. These countries

number forty out of the sixty separate nations and include most colonial areas. They are inhabited by 1,500 million of the world's 2,100 million people.

Upon request from governments the FAO will send out expert missions to assist in the improvement of agriculture and nutrition. It will help nations draw up plans, will furnish technical assistance and arrange for the loan of experts from other countries. It will review, on request, projects for the development of agriculture involving requests for international loans.

Certain other types of international action may be undertaken—the drawing up of conventions for the control of agricultural pests and diseases, the establishment of grades and standards, statistical measurements, nomenclature.

The FAO Constitution provides machinery for keeping the FAO in touch with public opinion. It will convene general, technical, regional or other special conferences to bring together representatives of responsible groups concerned with the fields of activity of the organisation. By such means the FAO will be aware constantly of the trend of public thinking.

## **V. RELATION OF FAO TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

The first United Nations Organisation to be established was UNRRA. It deals with the immediate problems of relief and rehabilitation in the countries which have been occupied by the enemy. It is a temporary agency. FAO will work closely with UNRRA in its rehabilitation activities. Most of the short-term work cannot be separated from the longer-term ; many of the policies adopted in the first years will have long-term significance and the FAO will be concerned to see that these develop along the lines agreed to by the Hot Springs Conference.

All the economic and social organisations to be set up by the United Nations will have the common goal of achieving an economy of abundance and rising standards of living. There must be co-operation among these organisations just as among the individual nations who comprise the organisations.

The Charter of the United Nations adopted at San Francisco, June 26, 1945, provides for such collaboration. The United Nations Organisation will consist of a General Assembly, a Security Council, an Economic and Social Council, an International Court of Justice, a Trusteeship Council, and a Secretariat. Membership will be open to all those States which participated in the United Nations Conference on International Organisation, and all other peace-loving states which accept the obligations of the Charter and which in the judgment of the Organisation are able and willing to carry out these obligations.

The Charter specifies that the various specialised inter-governmental agencies having wide international responsibility in economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related fields shall be brought into relationship with the United Nations. These relationships will be defined by the Economic and Social Council subject to the approval of the Assembly. The General Assembly, which consists of all members of the United Nations, will consider and approve any financial and budgetary arrangements of the specialised inter-governmental organisations, and will examine administrative arrangements of such agencies with a view to making recommendations to these agencies. The Economic and Social Council is authorised to co-ordinate the activities of these specialised agencies through consultation with and recommendations by such agencies and through recommendations by the General Assembly and members of the United Nations. It is also authorised to take appropriate steps to obtain regular reports from the specialised agencies, and to make arrangements to obtain reports on steps taken to give effect to its recommendations and those of the Assembly which fall within its competence. It may communicate observations on these reports to the Assembly.

The FAO is the first of these specialised agencies brought into existence by the United Nations and the constitution of the FAO provides for its constituting part of any general organisation to which may be entrusted the co-ordination of the activities of international organisations with special

responsibilities. The FAO will be one of a series of international organisations reporting not only to its constituent governments but also to the General Assembly, and maintaining the closest relationship with the Economic and Social Council and with one another.

The United Nations are thus preparing to continue their collaboration in peacetime. How effective this will be depends on how resolutely the nations determine to secure the freedom from want and fear. These freedoms can be achieved—but only through the sustained co-operation of all governments and all peoples.

*In the same series :*

**HELPING THE PEOPLE TO HELP THEMSELVES**

**U.N.R.R.A. :** The Story of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. (July 6, 1944). Price 4d. (5d)

**ALLIED PLAN FOR EDUCATION :** The Story of the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education. (Price 4d.)

responsibilities. The FAO will be one of a series of international organisations reporting not only to its constituent governments but also to the General Assembly, and maintaining the closest relationship with the Economic and Social Council and with one another.

The United Nations are thus preparing to continue their collaboration in peacetime. How effective this will be depends on how resolutely the nations determine to secure the freedom from want and fear. These freedoms can be achieved—but only through the sustained co-operation of all governments and all peoples.

HELPIN  
U. N. R.  
Rehabilita

ALLIE  
Confere

HX 632 A1 W9 no.1211  
World communism in the 20th  
century.

0172047A MAIN



To be purchased directly from H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE at the following addresses: York House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2.; 13a Castle Street, Edinburgh, 2.; 39-41 King Street, Manchester 2; 1 St. Andrew's Crescent, Cardiff; 80 Chichester Street, Belfast; or through any bookseller

*Price 4d. net.*

S.O. Code No. 88-2407\*